

near Bombay. Subsequent observers have also seen and heard the birds in July and August. Mr. George's note records an interesting discovery. The single specimen available does not permit racial identification though *A. s. meridionalis* (Legge) is known to be resident in Ceylon.—EDS.]

## 7. 'THE MOULTING OF DUCK AFTER ARRIVAL IN INDIA'

On 9 November 1961 I was shooting at a large lake in Nasik District, Maharashtra, when I saw a duck swimming on the water apparently unable to fly. When I approached it by boat, it attempted to escape by diving repeatedly. Thinking it was injured, I shot it, and, upon examination, found it lacking the primaries of both wings; evidently this prevented flight. The bird in question was a female white-eyed Pochard [*Aythya nyroca* (Güldenstädt)]. There are earlier records of similarly moulting Common Teal, Shoveller, and Wigeon having been obtained in the same area and at Bharatpur, Rajasthan (*J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 42 : 443-5; 44 : 300-1).

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November 24, 1961.

## 8. NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF NEPAL

I have followed with much pleasure Dr. Biswas's interesting series of articles in the *Journal* on the Birds of Nepal. The following notes are written with particular reference to the first three parts and include some fresh records collected during 1960-61. On the Pharping road, SW. of Kathmandu, there is a small jheel called Taudah. It is covered with water lilies and weeds and surrounded by grass and reeds. As it is in a cultivated area and people are always present, washing, watering cattle, or tending domestic ducks, I had not thought there would be many wild birds on it and rather neglected this area in the past. This year I found many new birds on it, and probably many of Scully's birds, not recorded since from the Valley, may have come from this area.

**Podiceps ruficollis capensis** Salvadori. Indian Little Grebe.

Not recorded in the Valley since Scully's day. On 21 March 1961 I found two pairs on the Taudah jheel. They were constantly uttering the peculiar whinnying cry which I have always associated with breeding birds. I remember in England watching a pair building in late February in a flooded quarry. As they collected water weed and piled it on to the nest they uttered this cry continuously. I visited the jheel again on 24 April. Only one pair was present, very wary and diving whenever one approached them. In June they had left the jheel and up-to-date (Oct.) they have not been seen there again.

**Nycticorax n. nycticorax** (Linn.). Night Heron.

I was quite mistaken in recording this bird as a resident in the Kathmandu Valley (*J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 48 : 719). Dr. Fleming first pointed out to me that it was certainly not here in winter and this is quite correct. This year I kept careful records. It was seen for the first time on 22 April, about 15 birds flying over the Royal Hotel at dusk. Not noticed again until the end of May when odd birds seen, also in June. Common July and August. Not noticed in September, but a single bird flew over my garden on 3 October in twilight. They used to be common standing along the side of the Rani Pokhri in the monsoon, but this year very few birds seen there. 2 birds on 19 October.

**Ixobrychus cinnamomeus** (Gmelin). Chestnut Bittern.

Only recorded by Biswas in the Dun of central Nepal, but one or two pairs breed regularly in the Valley near Gowkarna. They live in the rice fields during the monsoon. This year we shot a breeding male on 17 June.

**Anser indicus** (Latham). Barheaded Goose.

There appear to be no records for the Valley, but Colonel Roberts of the British Embassy shot one in the spring of 1959. He also reported seeing a single bird in the same area, the Manora River, just before Christmas 1960. On 10 October 1961 I saw a single bird flying over my garden. It was quite low and could be clearly seen. All these birds were solitary, and I suppose odd stragglers get separated from flocks of migrating birds and wander by chance into the Valley.

**Aythya nyroca** (Güldenstädt). White-eyed Pochard.

Not recorded from the Valley since Scully's time. Colonel Roberts tells me they are quite common on the lakes at Pokhara in central

Nepal in winter. This year 2 females were seen on the Rani Pokhri a small lake in Kathmandu town. They were there in the second week in May and remained for several days.

***Aythya fuligula* (Linn.). Tufted Duck.**

In early July I was told that there were 7 of these duck on the Rani Pokhri. I went down on 15 July and saw 3 drakes and 1 duck. They sat in a little knot in the middle of the lake. They were there till 30 July when only 1 drake and 1 duck remained. On 1 August 1 drake only; on 4 August all gone and none seen since. This seems a very odd record to me. Dr. Biswas has reported them on high elevation lakes in May, so perhaps these were birds which had finished breeding early, although one would think they had hardly had time for this.

***Accipiter gentilis schvedowi* (Menzbier). Goshawk.**

Although not recorded from the Valley since Scully's day the Goshawk is in fact tolerably common on the forested hills round the Valley. We have seen it many times on all the main ridges about 7500-8500 ft. (2300-2600 m.), but it never leaves the forest. It frequently perches on some prominent tree overlooking a little glade and no doubt watches to pounce on partridges etc., although we have never seen it do this. It does not appear to move at all with the seasons. On May 18 on the Mamche Danda a Goshawk flew into an oak very close to us. It was furiously mobbed by a pair of Jungle Crows. It is a large bird and could not possibly be confused with any other species. When perched other birds take no notice of it, but when it flies a chorus of terrified squeaks and calls accompany its passage.

***Spizaëtus nipalensis nipalensis* (Hodgson). Hodgson's Hawk-Eagle.**

Quite a common bird, although each pair has a very large territory. One pair for the whole Sheopuri Ridge, where in spring they perform a very beautiful nuptial flight. It is then possible to approach them closely. Another pair is resident on Phulchowk, and I think a third on the Nangi Danda Ridge beyond, but this might be the Phulchowk pair. Odd single birds are often seen on Nagar Jung, perhaps young birds without territory.

***Aquila chrysaëtus* (Linn.). Golden Eagle.**

Not uncommon on the Gandak-Kosi watershed above 9000 ft. (2800 m.) in summer. I have seen 2 adults and 1 young bird soaring

over the ridge below Thare Pate. My husband watched one at 14,000 ft. (4270 m.) on the Gosainkund Lekh in May. It attacked a covey of large partridges, perhaps the Tibetan Partridge, but he was unable to identify them.

***Circaëtus gallicus* (Gmelin).** Short-toed Eagle.

During the weekend of 14-16 April we were on the Kakani Ridge at 7000 ft. (2130 m.) and each day we saw this eagle soaring and frequently hovering along the north side of this ridge. Several times we saw it dive steeply into the Valley [which here drops abruptly to about 2000 ft. (600 m.)] but we were never able to see the end of the dive nor what it caught. On many later visits to this ridge we have not seen it again.

***Falco subbuteo* Linn.** The Hobby.

On 22 May 1961 on the Mamche Danda (the ridge north of the hills bounding the Kathmandu Valley) we watched 3 Hobbies wheeling round the oak-covered ridge on which we were camped. They were there all day, but never seemed to catch anything but butterflies, which they ate on the wing, holding them in their claws and tearing off the wings before eating them. A few days later Dr. Fleming said he saw 5 Hobbies behaving in exactly the same way on the ridge near Kakani. Both ridges between 7500-8500 ft. (2300-2600 m.). I have often seen them in winter, but then they are usually single. I have never seen them on the hills south of the Valley.

***Alectoris graeca chukar* (J. E. Gray).** Chukor.

Although we had constantly heard tales of Chukor on the hills round Kathmandu, we had not come across them in 12 years of searching, and were inclined to think the birds extinct in this area. However, this year we saw a covey near Kakani [7000 ft. (2130 m.)] in January, and in April my husband saw a bird calling. Dr. Fleming has since shot a bird and said they were tolerably common well east of Kathmandu, so our birds are not stragglers on the extreme eastern limit of their range as we had supposed.

***Francolinus francolinus asiae* Bonaparte.** Black Partridge.

I am sure this bird has increased very much in numbers during the last 5 years. It is now really common on the hills round Kakani at 5-7000 ft. (1520-2130 m.). Its call is heard on all sides during May, June, July, but we have never heard it call after the beginning of August.

***Ithaginis cruentus cruentus* (Hardwicke). Blood Pheasant.**

Common on the Gandak-Kosi watershed at 11-12,000 ft. (3350-3660 m.) in bamboo forest. They are very tame.

***Grus grus* (Linn.). Common Crane.**

***Anthropoides virgo* (Linn.). Demoiselle Crane.**

Both these birds are common in the Rapti Dun in winter. On 22 October my husband saw a flock migrating over the ridges beyond Kakani. He estimated the flock at about 300 birds. They flew at least 1000 ft. (300 m.) above the ridges but, although this was not necessary, they always flew directly over the passes which form the lowest point in each ridge. They flew directly south, avoiding the Kathmandu Valley and were making in a direct line for the area where we have seen them in winter. They appeared to have flown down the Trisuli Valley which leads through the main Himalayan mountains into Tibet. My husband was unable to tell to which species they belonged.

***Porzana pusilla pusilla* (Pallas). Baillon's Crake.**

Not recorded since Scully's day. I saw one on Taudah jheel on 21 March 1961. The reed cover was very thin and I had an excellent view as it walked nervously through the grass. I was able to get within 8 feet (c. 2 m.) of it. It must have been on migration as it has not been seen there again.

***Amauornis phoenicurus chinensis* (Boddaert). Whitebreasted Waterhen.**

Common in the Rapti Dun, but seen only once in the Valley. A single bird was in the rice near the Bagmatti River and when disturbed flew over the wall of the King's Reserve at Gowkarna. 17 June 1961.

***Gallinula chloropus indica* Blyth. Indian Moorhen.**

Very common in suitable country in the Rapti Dun, but not previously recorded from the Valley. This autumn I saw two birds on Taudah jheel on 23 September. They were still there on the 25th. On 7 October there were 5 birds. Teal and Garganey use this jheel as a resting place when migrating and on 7 October there were 77 Garganey on the jheel. The Moorhen kept together in a little cluster. The Garganey got up as we approached the water. The Moorhen did not fly with them but moved off together to the far side of the jheel.



***Eupodotis bengalensis bengalensis*** (Gmelin). Bengal Florican.

Biswas says this bird has not been found in Nepal since Hodgson's day, but it is certainly not uncommon in the Rapti Dun in winter. It is found in the open grass country between the Rapti and Narayani rivers. I have seen them several times in December and last year had an excellent view of one quite close to us. We had seen it fly into a mustard field and failed to flush it out, when it suddenly walked out quite near us. When it crouches its camouflage is excellent and it appears to melt suddenly out of sight.

***Scolopax rusticola rusticola*** Linn. Woodcock.

Woodcock breeds quite commonly on the Gandak-Kosi watershed. Most birds seen about 10,500-11,000 ft. (3200-3350 m.). We have found it there in early and late May and often watched it roding in the evenings. In winter it is also much commoner than I had supposed on the hills north of the Valley, where there are many small damp valleys with berberis, camellia, etc. bushes. They are found in the same place year after year.

***Calidris subminutus*** (Midden.). Longtoed Stint.

Dr. Fleming obtained this bird on the Bagmatti in May. This autumn I have examined carefully the flocks of Temminck's Stints which congregate on a small island in the Manora River from October to April. There are usually about 30 birds there, and two or three are darker than the others and spotted above. I had thought these were birds still in breeding plumage but think now that probably one or two Longtoed Stints are often present amongst the flocks of the commoner species.

***Rostratula benghalensis benghalensis*** (Linn.). Painted Snipe.

Not uncommon in the Rapti Dun in winter. We have seen odd ones in the Valley during the monsoon. My husband shot a male here in July and a female in November.

***Burhinus oedicnemus indicus*** (Salvadori). Indian Stone Plover.

On 24 August 1961 we saw a pair of these birds near the Manora River. They are obviously rare stragglers to the Valley during the monsoon.

***Cuculus poliocephalus poliocephalus*** Latham. Small Cuckoo.

This year we trekked up to the Gosainkund Lekh in late May and found this bird absolutely abundant from 8000 ft. (2450 m.) to

nearly 12,000 ft. (3660 m.). A breeding male was shot at 10,500 ft. (3200 m.). They start to call much later in the year than the other cuckoos and continue calling until the end of July when most of the other cuckoos are silent. I have not heard them before the first week of May. The Cuckoo and the Himalayan Cuckoo start to call in late March and the Indian Cuckoo in the first week of April. The first two birds call till the 3rd week of June, the Indian Cuckoo till the 3rd week of July.

**Coracias benghalensis benghalensis** (Linn.). Indian Roller.

Although never seen in the Nepal Valley it is common in the Dun and lower hills below 3500 ft. (1060 m.). This year a bird remained for some time on Kakani Ridge [7000 ft. (2130 m.)]. This was in August during heavy monsoon weather. It spent all day quartering the ridge and roosted at night in a solitary pine tree in front of the bungalow.

**Conostoma aemodium** Hodgson. Great Parrotbill.

This bird is extremely local but very common in the limited area where it occurs. This is the mixed bamboo, maple, etc. forest at 11,000-12,000 ft. (3350-3660 m.) along the head of the Tādi Khola on the Gosainkund Lekh. Every naturalist who has visited that area reports seeing them. We watched them for some time this year in late May and shot one which proved to be a female near breeding. The birds were very noisy with much churring and chattering very like a *Turdoides*. They have also a characteristic note very harsh *krrarchah*, *krarch krachah*. I did not hear the mellow whistle described by Smythies. They keep very much to bamboo jungle, and though large clumsy birds are skilful at keeping out of sight.

**Myzornis pyrrhoura** Blyth. Firetailed Myzornis.

On the Gandak-Kosi watershed in late May we found a pair of these birds feeding young in the nest. This was in deep juniper forest at 12,000 ft. (3660 m.). The parents were very busy collecting insects on the trunks of junipers and they ran up the trees almost in the manner of a tree-creeper. Their bills were absolutely crammed with tiny black insects.

**Callacanthus burtoni** (Gould). Redbrowed Finch.

I can find no records of this bird in Nepal, and never saw it here myself till this year. On 25 March, 3 of these birds were feeding on the ground on Shepuri at 8200 ft. (2500 m.). They were in an open glade

in deep forest. When disturbed they flew up into a bush but soon returned to the feeding ground. A male shot was not in breeding condition. They were quite silent. I have not seen them again.

**Leucosticte nemoricola nemoricola** (Hodgson). Hodgson's Mountain Finch.

Large flocks, at least 200 birds and probably many more, wander on to the hills north of the Valley during January to early March. They keep to the open grassy hillsides with berberis and pyrus bushes.

**Propyrrhula subhimachala subhimachala** (Hodgson). Redheaded Rosefinch.

We found these birds tolerably common in the high level mixed forest above Pokhara in November, but had never seen them in the Kathmandu Valley until this year. On 27 March on Sheopuri at 8400 ft. (2560 m.) I watched a pair of these birds feeding on the berries of *Mahonia nipalensis*. The male was gorging on the green berries, half hidden by them and obviously under the impression that he was completely hidden for, when a cooly passed by, he froze and allowed the man almost to brush against him. I managed to creep very close and he continued feeding, sometimes turning almost upside down to pick a berry and then reversing to normal position while he ate it. He was presently joined by the female who perched lower in the bush, and also ate the berries and was equally tame. A very beautiful sight.

**Carpodacus thura thura** Bonaparte & Schlegel. Whitebrowed Rosefinch.

During the last week of May we found these birds very common at Thare Pate on the Gandak-Kosi watershed. They were in pairs, but the pairs kept together in loose flocks. A female shot was not in breeding condition. They were always found in *Rhododendron campanulatum*, which was still in flower between 12,000 ft. (3660 m.) and 13,000 ft. (4000 m.). The birds were rather noisy. They had a ringing call but harsh and ill-tempered in sound *cha cha cha cha cha*.

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
KATHMANDU,  
NEPAL,  
October 19, 1961.

DESIRÉE PROUD



9. CORRECTIONS TO 'SOME NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF THE NEPAL VALLEY'

I would like to make the following corrections to my paper 'Some Notes on the Birds of the Nepal Valley' (*J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 48 : 695-719) which was based on sight records :

p. 711. *Riparia riparia*: Small Sand Martin.

This should of course be ***Riparia paludicola*** (Vieillot): Plain Sand Martin. I have seen birds with a faint dark band across the breast, but all shot have been *paludicola*.

p. 712. *Anthus campestris*: Tawny Pipit.

A complete mistake. I have never found this pipit here. The pipits of the Valley are as follows :

***Anthus hodgsoni hodgsoni*** Richmond: Hodgson's Tree Pipit. Breeds on the higher hills up to at least 13,000 ft. A few pairs breed as low as 8000 ft. On 22 May 1961 I found a pair feeding young in the nest at 8000 ft. on the Mamche Danda. They winter on the hills round the Valley from 6500 to 8500 ft., but I have never found one in the Valley itself.

***Anthus hodgsoni yunnanensis*** Uchida & Kuroda: Yunnan Tree Pipit. Abundant wintering bird in the Valley and Duns. First date this year 22 September, a single bird in my garden. Most arrive first week October. All gone by 19 April.

***Anthus novaeseelandiae richardi*** Vieillot: Richard's Paddyfield Pipit. Winter visitor and passage migrant.

***Anthus novaeseelandiae rufulus*** Vieillot: Paddyfield Pipit. The common breeding pipit of the Valley and up to 7000 ft. in places.

***Anthus pelopus*** J. E. Gray: Hodgson's Pipit. Breeds commonly on the higher hills, above 11,000 ft. Very abundant at 12,000 to 13,000 ft. I have not been higher than this, so do not know to what height it goes. Winters in the Valley and Duns.

***Anthus cervinus*** (Pallas): Redthroated Pipit. I think a passage migrant. A few are seen in the marsh round the rice fields each year in September, but I have not yet obtained a specimen and this may not be a correct identification.

**Anthus (Oreocorys) sylvanus** (Hodgson): Upland Pipit. Common on all the hills from 5500 to 8000 ft., but rather local.

p. 713. *Aethopyga gouldiae*: Mrs. Gould's Sunbird.

This should be **Aethopyga nipalensis** (Hodgson): Nepal Yellow-backed Sunbird.

p. 719. *Nycticorax nycticorax*: Night Heron.

This is only a monsoon visitor to the Valley.

BRITISH EMBASSY,

KATHMANDU,

NEPAL,

September 26, 1961.

DESIRÉE PROUD

#### 10. RECOVERIES OF RINGED MIGRATORY AND RESIDENTIAL BIRDS AT HINGOLGADH, JASDAN

An Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis* ringed on 27th September 1960 at Hingolgadh, Jasdan, was recaptured at the same place on 21st September 1961. Similarly, a Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* ringed on 10th October 1960 at Panelia (barely 3 miles as the crow flies from Hingolgadh) was recaptured there on 13th October 1961. These birds must have travelled many thousands of miles during the year, but they were recaptured in the same places.

There were several recoveries in Sept./Oct. 1961 of residential birds ringed in Sept./Oct. 1960. In all these cases: 5 Redvented Bulbuls, 1 Indian Robin, 1 Rufousbacked Shrike, 1 Baybacked Shrike, 1 Great Grey Shrike, no bird ringed at Panelia was recovered at Hingolgadh and *vice versa*. In fact in the case of the Great Grey Shrike, the bird was ringed on 10th October 1960 and recaptured on 13th October 1961 in the same babool tree as last year. This time it had brought along its mate too and so both now have rings.

A House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) was caught at Jasdan, and ringed (A 3072) and released at Hingolgadh 12 miles from Jasdan on 27th September 1960. It was recaptured at Jasdan on 6th April 1961 where it was building a nest in the same room where it had been caught in 1960.

THE PALACE,

JASDAN,

October 15, 1961.

YUVRAJ SHIVRAJKUMAR